

Landmark Application
87 Nepperhan Avenue
Supplemental Comments

In the matter of the application for the landmarking of 87 Nepperhan Avenue, Yonkers New York:

The applicant requests landmark status for a structure located on a portion of Block 488, Lot 1, in the City of Yonkers known as the Health Center. Landmark status is requested for an area no less than 15' around the perimeter of the building, with the following exception: in the case where construction may occur on any location or lot immediately adjacent to the structure and its 15' perimeter, an additional buffer area is requested to be determined after analysis by a certified engineer from both the proposed construction site and the city of Yonkers to deter structural damage or undermining of any point within the 15' perimeter or the building itself.

87 Nepperhan Avenue was built between 1930 and 1933 with oversight from the City of Yonkers' Commissioner of Health, Dr. Clarence Whitfield Buckmaster, noted physician and obstetrics specialist who worked tirelessly at combating contagious diseases.

While Buckmaster was Health Commissioner, Yonkers gained a national reputation for having one of the nation's lowest death rates. In fact, in 1930, as the new Health Center was under construction, Yonkers had the second lowest death rate in the country. Decades earlier, in 1886, Yonkers also led New Yorkers by building the first public bath house in the state to provide free hot and cold water 14 hours per day for its citizens. Construction of the Health Center building, at a cost of \$400,000, continued this pioneering trend to improve public health. By 1933, as the building was completed, Buckmaster had almost completely eliminated the incidence of diphtheria in Yonkers through an immunization campaign, from 438 to only 3 cases.

The construction of 87 Nepperhan allowed Burkmaster to consolidate 14 health clinics scattered throughout the city into one more manageable, centrally-located facility. The building housed the Health Department's executive offices, branch clinics that included a women's health center and several free clinics as well as an extensive medical laboratory. The much acclaimed building was also home to the Yonkers Academy of Medicine, a private organization of physicians, while housing a free dental clinic to treat the poor. The Health Center would allow the various medical teams in Yonkers greater success in efforts toward or the prevention of disease.

87 Nepperhan Avenue is included in the Yonkers Planning Bureau's published inventory of historic properties in the City of Yonkers, where it is indicated as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Taffy Williams

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